

VZCZCXRO5796  
RR RUEHBC RUEHDH RUEHKUK RUEHROV  
DE RUEHAM #0311 0341347  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 031347Z FEB 10 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6837  
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS AMMAN 000311

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: JORDAN: HONOR CRIME TRIBUNAL SENTENCES PERPETRATOR  
TO TEN YEARS IN PRISON

REF: A. 09 AMMAN 2741

[B](#). 09 AMMAN 2624

[C](#). 09 AMMAN 2578

[D](#). 09 AMMAN 2324

[E](#). 09 AMMAN 2307

[1](#). On January 28, Jordan's honor crime tribunal sentenced a 19-year-old man to ten years in prison for murdering his 20-year-old sister in April 2009. The court originally handed down a full 15-year murder sentence but immediately reduced the sentence to ten years when the victim's father dropped charges against his son. The sentence will be appealed to the Court of Cassation.

[2](#). This murder case highlighted the practice of administratively detaining women at-risk of an honor crime for their "own protection." The victim was detained by police and placed under administrative protection after her family complained to authorities she had left home on several occasions. The victim's grandfather bailed the victim out and allowed her to stay with him for one month. The victim, however, reportedly fled to another relative's house after discovering the grandfather intended to send her back to administrative detention. Upon discovering the location of his sister's new location, the perpetrator grabbed a knife, entered his relative's house, and stabbed the victim nine times. This murder is one of several reported the past couple years where the victim was released from administrative detention into the hands of relatives only then to be killed by a family member.

[3](#). This case was the fourth tried before the tribunal. In its first two rulings, the tribunal issued full 15-year murder sentences. A Ministry of Justice official told Poloffs on February 2 that in these two cases the victim's parents did not actually drop charges and, therefore, the tribunal did not have an opportunity to consider a reduction based on the family's wishes. The official told Poloffs that cousins and distant relatives did try to "drop charges" but that only the immediate family can exercise this right. In its last two rulings, the court has issued 10-year sentences.

[4](#). Comment: In its rulings, the tribunal has reduced charges based on the family's wishes. Ministry of Justice officials have previously told Post they will try to stop or at least greatly restrict this practice when the victim and perpetrator come from the same family. Based on these four cases, the tribunal's average sentence is now 12.5 years, which is significantly higher than pre-tribunal averages. In the past, judges would hand down sentences as low as six months because they would reduce the sentence in half after the family dropped charges and then rule the killing was committed in a "moment of rage." Nonetheless, the tribunal's rulings highlight the need to amend the penal code to stop judges from reducing sentences based on family desires when the perpetrator and victim are from the same family. The Justice official states this issue is being discussed as part of an overall penal code reform package but could not guarantee such an amendment would be ultimately included.

Post has and will continue to push the government to stop this practice and amend the penal code accordingly. End Comment.  
Beecroft